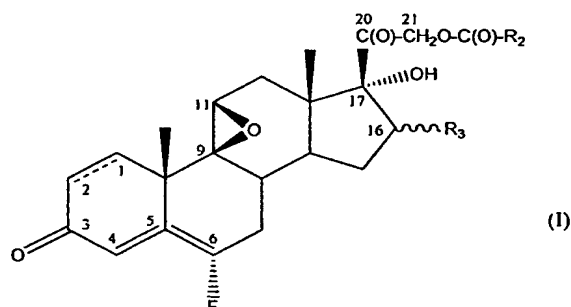


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing: of Claims:

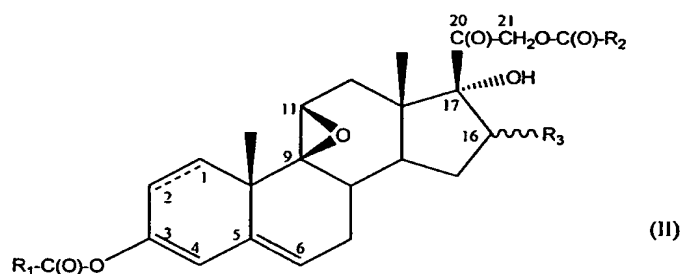
1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of 6 α -fluoro compounds of formula I,



wherein

R₂ is hydrogen, C₁-C₈ alkyl or C₃-C₈ cycloalkyl; and

R₃ is hydrogen, C₁-C₈ alkyl, or R₄-C(O)-O- where R₄ is C₁-C₈ alkyl or C₁-C₈ hydroxyalkyl; comprising the fluorination of pregnane derivatives in the 6-position with an electrophilic fluorination agent, in an inert solvent and at ambient temperatures, characterized ~~characterised~~ in that (1) a compound of formula II



wherein

R₁ is phenyl or phenyl substituted with halogen, hydroxy, amino, mono- or di-C₁-C₈ alkylamino, C₁-C₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkoxy and/or C₁-C₈ carbalkoxy; and R₂ and R₃ have the meanings given before; is reacted with an electrophilic fluorination agent (2) in the presence of a salt of a strong acid with a nitrogenous base under (3) substantial water-free reaction conditions.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein R₂ is methyl.

3. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~claims~~claim 1 or 2, wherein R₃ is hydrogen, methyl or acetoxy.

4. (Currently Amended) A process according to any one of claims 1 to 2~~claims 1 to 3~~, wherein R₁ is phenyl or phenyl substituted with fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy or~~and~~ methoxycarbonyl.

5. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the solvent is selected from the group of nitriles, N-dialkylated carboxylic acid amides or N-alkylated cyclic carboxylic acid amides, ethers and carboxylic esters.

6. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction temperature is from -20°C to 50°C.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 8, wherein the fluorinating agent is 1-chloromethyl-4-fluoro-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2,2,2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate, or 1-fluoro-4-hydroxy-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2,2,2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate.

8. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the salt is an amine salt ~~corresponding~~corresponds to formula III,



wherein HB⁺ is the cation of an aliphatic, aromatic, cyclic aliphatic or cyclic aromatic nitrogen base, and A⁻ is the anion of a strong organic or inorganic acid, ~~and wherein the amine salt is preferably pyridine methylsulfonate.~~

9. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the amount of ~~amine~~the salt is from 0.1 to 100 ~~and preferably 50 to 90 percent~~ by weight, referred to the amount of compounds of formula II.

10. (Currently Amended) Compounds of formula II,

